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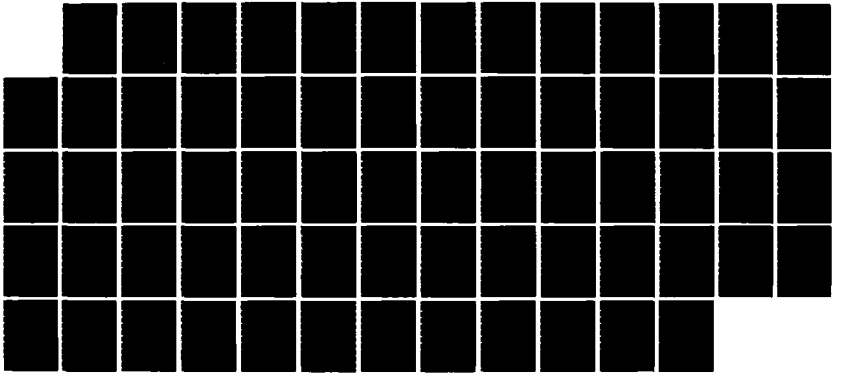

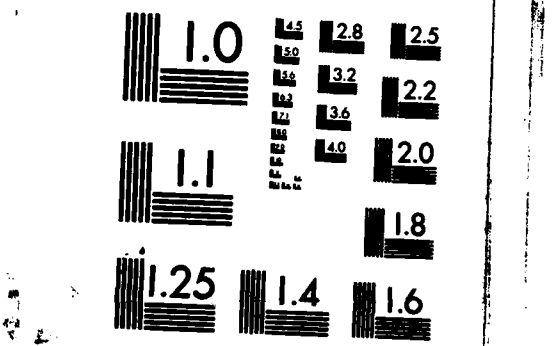

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THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

AN ASSESSMENT OF THE NATIONAL CAMPAIGN PLAN FOR EL SALVADOR: PLANNING FOR SUCCESS OR FAILURE?

BY

VICTOR MANUEL ROSELLO, JR.

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

MARCH 1984

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(From Summary and Conclusions) The National Campaign Plan for El Salvador is a U.S. inspired program which was put into operation in June of 1983 in the departments of San Vicente and Usulutan. It is based on the CORDS sponsored pacification in Vietnam. The success of CORDS sponsored pacification reflected some gains in securing the countryside of RVN, but overall it failed to achieve more important and long range goals. To insure success, an effective counter-insurgency plan should confront and challenge the insurgency on three levels. First, from a programmatic standpoint. Second, it must tackle the insurgents'

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-cause. Third, it should deal with the underlying issues of social values and human pride. The study concludes that unless U.S. counterinsurgency planners practice the lessons learned from the Vietnam war, the National Plan stands to fall short of its objective of defeating the Salvadoran insurgency.

An Assessment of the National Campaign Plan for El Salvador: Planning for Success or Failure?

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THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

AN ASSESSMENT OF THE NATIONAL CAMPAIGN PLAN FOR EL SALVADOR: PLANNING FOR SUCCESS OR FAILURE?

A RESEARCH PAPER SUBMITTED TO

THE FACULTY OF THE DIVISION OF THE HUMANITIES

IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

DEPARTMENT OF HUMANITIES

BY

VICTOR MANUEL ROSELLO, JR.

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

~~MARCH 1994~~

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PREFACE

> We must . . . understand the nature of military forces themselves. They are designed, equipped and trained for a specific task: to fight and win on the battlefield. . . . In the past we have tried to use them to accomplish tasks for which they were not designed--nation building in Vietnam being the most recent case in point.[1]
>
> Col. Harry G. Summers, Jr.

The motivating factor in writing this research paper is my sincere desire to highlight the limits of military operations with respect to the predominant political, economic, and social problems which constitute the causes of insurgencies. Often, governments find it easier to seek a military solution to these problems rather than search for non-military alternatives.

The United States military is a highly professional organization of dedicated men and women who are ready, willing, and capable of accomplishing worldwide military missions in a highly efficient and most expert manner. Before assigning missions, it is important for policy makers in our government to insure that the tasks are viable, realistic, and within the capabilities of the military. To maintain its high degree of professionalism and effectiveness, the military must be used selectively and prudently. Otherwise the armed forces will suffer a loss of prestige, pride, and morale when its resources are improperly used.

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[1]Col. Harry G. Summers, Jr., On Strategy: A Critical Analysis of the Vietnam War (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1982), p. 184.

In the course of preparing this research paper, many people have kindly volunteered their time and knowledge to assist me in its completion. I am particularly grateful to Lt. Col. Ralph C. Gauer, the former director of the United States Army Foreign Area Officer Course at the John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center, Fort Bragg, North Carolina; Capt. Duane Nathaniel of the Combined Arms and Tactics Department at the United States Army Infantry School, Fort Benning, Georgia; Prof. John H. Coatsworth, Department of History at the University of Chicago; and Mr. Ken Zabielski of the Internal Review Office, Fort Sheridan, Illinois. I am especially grateful to Mr. Douglas S. Blaufarb, an authority on counterinsurgency, for inspiring me to write this paper as a result of the influence of his major contribution to the subject, The Counterinsurgency Era: U.S. Doctrine and Performance, 1950 to the Present.

INTRODUCTION

The purposes of this study are to identify the strengths and weaknesses of current U.S. counterinsurgency doctrine and to provide an objective evaluation of its application in the National Campaign Plan for El Salvador.

A thorough evaluation of the National Plan has been a difficult undertaking because the plan is currently classified "Secret" and, is not available for public dissemination.[1] What facts are known about the plan have been made available through press releases, newspapers, and magazine articles.

For this study to be of any value an assumption was made that, based on open source material, the Plan for El Savador is similar, if not identical, to U.S. programs instituted during the Vietnam War. For this reason this study draws heavily from the Vietnam experience.

To more effectively provide the necessary background for discussion of such a controversial subject, this study is divided into eight chapters. Chapter I is an historical discussion of the emergence of the Plan and is presented for the benefit of the reader who is unfamiliar with its goals and objectives. Chapter II presents definitions and a brief background of the early beginnings of U.S. counterinsurgency strategy and doctrine with its implementation under the

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[1]Telephonic interview with Col. John D. Waghelstein, U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania, 23 January 1984.

Kennedy and Johnson administrations, as well as the present administration. Definitions are based on Department of the Army field manuals which constitute basic guidance for U.S. military and civilian planners. Chapter III continues the examination of U.S. counterinsurgency goals by providing excerpts from U.S. Internal Defense and Development doctrinal writings. Chapter IV provides a basic understanding of the U.S. inspired plan for Vietnam pacification known as Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support (CORDS) and various programs which led to its eventual development and implementation. Chapter V is an evaluation of the CORDS sponsored program and a measurement of its strong points, weaknesses, and total degree of success. Chapter VI and VII are critical to understanding the additional problems that the National Plan must address to guarantee success. Finally, Chapter VIII summarizes all the key points made in the preceding sections and makes a final evaluation of the National Plan for El Savador.

CHAPTER I

THE NATIONAL PLAN FOR EL SALVADOR: AN HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

On 2 February 1983 American and Salvadoran government officials met to consider a plan presented by Army Col. John D. Waghelstein, the chief United States military adviser in El Salvador. The plan, designed to clear the countryside of Salvadoran leftists guerrillas, was officially named the National Plan for El Salvador[1] or the National Campaign Plan.[2]

The National Plan is said to be modeled after the Civil Operations and Rural Development Support (CORDS) sponsored program developed by the United States in Vietnam.[3] Other references have been made to its general similarity to Vietnam "rural pacification."[4] Although the Salvadoran High Command was reluctant to implement a "gringo" operation, the Plan, in fact, was written by experts primarily from the United States Southern Command in Panama.

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[1]Lydia Chavez, "The Odds in El Savador: Again the U.S. Army Faces an Elusive Enemy," The New York Times Magazine, 24 July 1983, p. 14.

[2]Charles Mohr, "Salvador Combat: U.S. is Now More Hopeful," The New York Times, 12 August 1983, p. A1.

[3]Stephen Oriofsky, ed., "Operation Well Being Begins," Facts on File, vol. 43, 17 June 1983, p. 448.

[4]Lydia Chavez, "U.S. Pilot Program in Salvadoran Area in Danger of Failing," The New York Times, 18 December 1983, p. 1.

Nonetheless, four months later, on 10 June 1983, the operational plan was initiated.[1] The decision was made that the test ground for the plan would be the departments (provinces) of San Vicente and portions of Usulután, both key economic areas of Salvadoran agricultural export.[2]

In keeping with United States counterinsurgency doctrine, the Plan was designed in two phases. Phase one ~~of the plan~~ would require the Salvadoran armed forces to clear the departments of guerrilla activity. Once this was accomplished, the army would remain in the area to provide the second phase with security from guerrilla interference. The second phase, civic reconstruction and development, would incorporate social and economic programs financed by the U.S. State Department's Agency for International Development. These programs are designed to better the living conditions of the inhabitants of the departments in order to earn their loyalty. Additionally, they are assisted in raising and training a people's defense force capable of providing local security against guerrilla influence.[3] The creation of a people's defense force is critical to the plan because it reduces the requirement of a military presence by government forces. As the program succeeds in these departments, the same strategy is repeated in adjoining departments.

A successful military sweep marked the beginning of the operational plan as government forces numbering between 4,000 and

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[1]Chavez, "The Odds in El Salvador," p. 17.

[2]Mohr, p. A4.

[3]Ibid.

5,000, stormed and cleared Chichontepec volcano, a guerrilla stronghold dominating the Department of San Vicente.[1] This early success, however, has been overshadowed by reports arriving from the region that seem to indicate that all is not going well for the National Plan. In fact according to American officials it is in danger of failing.[2] The problem appears to reflect the failure of the Salvadoran government to properly execute the two phases of the National Plan. The Salvadoran Army has, apparently, failed to secure the countryside,[3] thus condemning the civic action to failure.

Lack of security has even led to payment of protection money to guerrillas in order to protect government projects in the Department of San Vicente.[4] As if this were not enough, the civic action projects which began in June 1983, have been stalled by government bureaucratic problems.[5]

What does this mean for the National Plan? Considering these initial failures, will the National Plan succeed in El Salvador in the long run? To provide some insight into these complex questions, it is necessary to examine the basics of U.S. counterinsurgency strategy and doctrine.

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[1]Oriofsky, p. 448.

[2]Chavez, "U.S. Pilot Program," p. 1.

[3]Chris Hedges, "Rebels Pull Strings of US Aid Program in El Salvador Province," The Christian Science Monitor, 9 December 1983, p. 52.

[4]Ibid.

[5]Chavez, "U.S. Pilot Program," p. 12.

CHAPTER II

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE UNITED STATES COUNTERINSURGENCY STRATEGY AND DOCTRINE

The United States government's first involvement in countering Communist insurgency occurred during the Greek Civil War from 1947 through 1949.[1] The United States' assistance to this successful Greek government campaign was limited to providing advisory training, logistical support, equipment, and economic aid. Furthermore, because the United States' experience in this military action was primarily conventional, this insurgency had little or no value in formulating United States views of insurgency as a special problem.[2]

The United States involvement in the Philippine insurgency which lasted from 1946 to 1957:

> . . . can be looked upon as the beginning of active counterinsurgency by the U.S. because the experience was clearly different from conventional combat and because the program undertaken by the Philippine government encompassed, at least embryonically, the wide gamut of activity which became characteristic of American counterinsurgency thinking.[3]

As in the Greek insurgency the United States influence was limited to economic and technical military aid.[4] Due to the unconventional nature

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[1]Douglas S. Blaufarb, The Counterinsurgency Era: U.S. Doctrine and Performance, 1950 to the Present, with a Foreword by William P. Bundy (New York: The Free Press, 1977), p. 22.

[2]Ibid., pp. 22-23. [3]Ibid., p. 23. [4]Ibid., p. 38.

of this insurgency, and the success of the Philippine government in countering it, the United States may have developed a false sense of security in dealing with future insurgencies.

> Most specifically, it experienced the confidence that a modicum of advice, of technical assistance, and of economic and military aid could suffice to put a threatened nation back on its feet and on the way to success in counterinsurgency.[1]

Under the Kennedy Administration in the early sixties, the United States' attitudes toward counterinsurgency formally took shape. At this time the United States began a serious and concerted effort in preparing to deal with what was then perceived as the threat of Communist support for "Wars of National Liberation."[2] The United States, however, was ill-prepared to take any effective measures. Counterinsurgency was a new word and an equally newer concept.[3] Most military and civilian officials knew nothing of the strategies of insurgents, let alone how to counter them. Insurgent war was erroneously viewed as being synonymous to the guerrilla warfare of the resistance movements of World War II.[4] Instead insurgent war:

> . . . more clearly subordinated military [guerrilla warfare] to political action; paid greater heed to the interaction in any prolonged conflict of economic, psychological, political, and

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[1]Ibid., p. 40.

[2]Ibid., p. 52.

[3]Charles M. Simpson III, Inside the Green Berets: The First Thirty Years, with a Foreword by William P. Yarborough (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1983), p. 63.

[4]Ibid., p. 53.

> military factors; and pounded endlessly on the theme that support of an indigenous population was the key to success.[1]

Not until 1962 in Vietnam would the United States' first major experience in counterinsurgency, the Strategic Hamlet program, reveal some of the glaring realities of this type of confrontation. Though the program was unsuccessful, the United States would begin to slowly learn the importance of effective government response to the security needs of its people as a tool in thwarting insurgency.[2]

Regardless, the administration was determined to confront these "Wars". As a result, counterinsurgency under Kennedy has often been described as:

> . . . another name for counterrevolution, a conspiracy of some sort to suppress popular revolution around the world. However . . . it is clear that the original concept was at the opposite pole. It was intended as a means of encouraging the inevitable and sometimes violent changes taking place in the underdeveloped world to take a democratic and libertarian direction. The motives were therefore consistent with American principles to deal with new challenges in a tumultuously changing world. In the minds of its originators they were blazing new and worthy paths in the tradition of such recent triumphs as the Marshall Plan.[3]

Unfortunately for the Latin American recipients of the "worthy paths" of United States foreign policy, well meaning intentions often caused more indirect harm than good.

Even though neither formal programs nor effective concepts had been devised, United States counterinsurgency "doctrine" began to be applied based on the lessons learned from limited U.S. experience

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[1]Ibid., p. 67. [2]Ibid., p. 125. [3]Blaufarb, p. 88.

under a program instituted by Kennedy in 1960, the "Alliance for Progress."[1] The Alliance was a two-part Kennedy response to fight Cuban-style revolution and radicalism in Latin America and to encourage democratization and structural change.[2] It took its greatest influence from the economic theories of economist Walt W. Rostow. He claimed that, based on the study of British and American economic development, the modernization or industrialization process of every nation was made up of a series of stages.[3] According to him, the take-off stage, whereby a nation moved to industrialization, was considered the most important. The Alliance, therefore, intended to assist underdeveloped nations to achieve this stage.[4]

In a ten year period the administration followed through the first response by pumping 100 billion dollars into the development of Latin America.[5] This money was used to fund technological and industrial equipment. "In return, Latin American governments were to institute programs of social and political reform."[6] Though justified in the eyes of the president to combat Communist insurgency "from its inception, the Alliance focused at least as much on antirevolutionary

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[1]Benjamin Keen and Mark Wasserman, A Short History of Latin America (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1980), p. 479.

[2]Walter LaFeber, Inevitable Revolutions: The United States in Central America (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1983), p. 151.

[3]Keen and Wasserman, p. 479.

[4]Ibid.

[5]LaFeber, p. 148.

[6]Keen and Wasserman, p. 479.

as on developmental activity. Indeed, they were to be two sides of the same policy."[1] The program appeared to have a good chance of success. "Demands for revolution were to be met with evolution."[2]

Rostow's theory also stated that a government in a take-off stage was particularly vulnerable to insurgency.[3] The second response, the Military Assistance Program, involved a fifty percent annual increase of United States military aid to Latin America, and included participation by virtually all federal departments, as well as the U.S. armed forces. During the period 1961 to 1964, the United States provided 500 million dollars toward this effort.[4] This aid helped create large U.S. trained military groups that were responsible for the "internal security" of their respective countries.[5] "Officers from the region received the most modern training in counterinsurgency tactics against both rural and urban guerrillas and were indoctrinated to the American world view."[6]

Even with all its high expectations the plan eventually backfired on President Kennedy. An early drawback of his strategy in Central America was the forceful maintenance of the oligarchical status quo by the newly trained military groups.[7] "Between 1961 and 1966, the military overthrew nine Latin American governments including Guatemala's and Honduras's in 1963."[8]

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[1] LaFeber, p. 148.

[2] Ibid., p. 149.

[3] Keen and Wasserman, p. 479.

[4] Ibid., p. 480

[5] LaFeber, p. 151.

[6] Keen and Wasserman, p. 480.

[7] LaFeber, p. 151.

[8] Ibid., p. 152.

However, Kennedy's enthusiasm for counterinsurgency never diminished. It was during this period that the U.S. Army Special Forces (Green Berets) became part of the new national interest in counterinsurgency. Their background in unconventional and guerrilla warfare qualified them as the principal trainers of foreign government forces in counter guerrilla operations.[1]

> Both in numbers and variety, Special Forces mission in Latin America have been notable. Between early 1963 and 1970, the peak period, nearly 500 SF training or assistance teams were dispatched to nineteen countries. The number of Latin Americans who received Special Forces training was well up in six figures; in 1965 alone, 285 . . . SF troopers managed to instruct more than 41,000 military men in Latin America.[2]

During the same period special light infantry units were trained and organized. Today, these type of units receive much attention from the press, as in the case of El Salvador. It was a Bolivian Army unit which received training of this type that was credited with capturing and killing Ernest "Che" Guevara in Bolivia in 1967. "Although insurgency was not really eliminated anywhere, there was a great reduction in the effectiveness of rural insurgency."[3]

The idea of combining military with development actions also began to take root and characterized Special Forces military assistance missions. In a typical Special Forces organization:

> . . . a small Civil Affairs Group included specialists in public health, education, sanitation, civil administration, public works, and forestry. A Psychological Operations Batallion had experts in radio and leaflet propaganda, public information, entertainment,

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[1]Simpson, p. 67. [2]Ibid., p. 83. [3]Ibid., pp. 83-4.

> and education, all backed up by sophisticated mobile equipment. The Engineer Detachment provided professional experience on all kinds of construction, maintenance, road building, water purification, and well drilling. . . . A Medical Detachment of experts [provided expertise] in preventive medicine, dentistry, hygiene, sanitation, and public health, as well as general medicine and surgery. . . .[1]

All along Kennedy probably wished that the Latin American military would become more involved in these types of socio-economic programs. "The Alliance had designed these programs to improve the Military's image by involving soldiers in building schools and roads."[2] But even this had its drawbacks:

> Civic action . . . did little for economic balance and democracy. The program turned civilian jobs over to government troops even as unemployment was rampant. It promoted militarism and gave the generals an increased voice in economics and social policies."[3]

Economically, the Alliance fared no better in reaching the masses allegedly susceptible to the influence of Communist revolutionaries:

> Alliance funds in massive amounts went to U.S.-owned firms and to the Central American oligarchs that controlled banks and merchant businesses as well as the best tillable land. . . .[4] Rather than deterring the possibility of revolution, the Alliance created a more violent situation which, perhaps, can be blamed for having accelerated the process of unrest in this region. . . . [In reality] the program . . . widened the gap between the rich and the masses.[5]

With the Vietnam War increasing in priority, half of Kennedy's Alliance program was later dismantled during the Johnson administration.

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[1] Ibid., p. 69. [2] LaFeber, p. 203. [3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid., p. 154. [5] Ibid., p. 155.

Though economic aid was reduced, military support continued.[1] Even though economic support took a back seat to military aid, the priorities of the program under Johnson continued to be economic growth, anti-Communism, and maintenance of the socio-politico status quo.[2] These priorities are usually insured by stable and dependable military regimes. The priority of anti-Communism ultimately resulted in U.S. armed intervention in the Dominican Republic in April and May of 1965.

The adverse effect of this action on U.S. foreign policy led to a lessening of U.S. involvement, at least temporarily, in the region. The Alliance programs still continued to limp along, but by the late sixties, their emphasis was on private investment:

> . . . that worsened the already glaring economic imbalance in Central America; a dependence on the military--trained and supplied by the United States--to maintain order in restless societies; and promises made repeatedly by Kennedy, Johnson, and other U.S. officials that raised hopes and aspirations."[3]

That the Alliance was headed for trouble could not be argued. Senator Robert Kennedy's words at that time predicted the expected turn of events:

> These people [of Latin America] will not accept this kind of existence for the next generation. We would not; they will not. There will be changes. So a revolution is coming--a revolution which will be peaceful if we are wise enough; compassionate if we care enough; successful if we are fortunate enough--but a revolution which is coming whether we will it or not. We can affect its character; we cannot alter its inevitability.[4]

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[1]Ibid., p. 156. [2]Ibid., p. 157. [3]Ibid., p. 159.

[4]Ibid., p. 160.

Robert Kennedy's prophesy became reality with the 1979 Sandinista Revolution in Nicaragua.

As pointed out previously, "worthy paths" often lose their identity in the world of U.S. foreign policy. For example, under the Reagan administration the United States has become more straight forward in its intentions; has dropped the pretenses as reflected in the policies of the Kennedy administration; and instead has adopted a counterinsurgency policy which wishes to establish its credibility by "drawing the line" against "Communist aggression." This counter-insurgency policy is aimed at defeating what is described in El Salvador as a "textbook case of indirect armed aggression by the Communist powers."[1] The report of the President's Commission on Central America, made public on 12 January 1984, seems to add weight to the administration's attitudes about the situation in the region. The Commission stated that:

> . . . the roots of the crisis are both indigenous and foreign. Discontents are real, and for much of the population conditions of life are miserable; just as Nicaragua was ripe for revolution, so the conditions that invite revolution are present elsewhere in the region as well. But these conditions have been exploited by hostile outside forces--specifically by Cuba, backed by the Soviet Union and now operating through Nicaragua--which will turn any revolution they capture into a totalitarian state, threatening the region and robbing the people of their hopes and for liberty.
>
> . . . indigenous reform, even indigenous revolution, is not a security threat to the United States. But the intrusion of aggressive outside powers exploiting local grievances to expand

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[1]William M. LeoGrande, "A Splendid Little War: Drawing the Line in El Salvador," Revolution in Central America, John Althoff et al., eds. (Boulder: Westview Press, 1983), p. 98.

> their own political influence and military control is a serious threat to the United States, and the hemisphere.[1] (Emphasis added.)

National attitudes or righteous justification policies aside, the truth of the matter is that the definition and objectives of U.S. counterinsurgency have changed little from the time of Kennedy through the present administration. In the early sixties, the U.S. government defined counterinsurgency in the following manner:

> . . . all military, political, economic, psychological, and sociological activites directed toward preventing and suppressing resistance groups whose actions range in degree of violence and scope from subversive political activity to violent actions by large guerrilla elements to overthrow a duly established government. . . .[2] (Emphasis added.)

Over the years it appears that the United States attempted to refine the basic term "counterinsurgency" rather than the policy itself, with no appreciable change in doctrine. In 1967, during the Vietnam War, the U.S. Army dropped the term "counterinsurgency" from its manuals and substituted it with "stability operations." Stability operations were defined as:

> . . . [the] full range of Internal Defense and Development operations and assistance which the U.S. Army can employ to maintain, restore, or establish a climate or order within which government under law can function effectively and without which progress in modernization cannot be achieved.[3] (Emphasis added.)

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[1] "Key Sections From Study of Latin Region by Reagan Panel," The New York Times, 12 January 1984, p. 6.

[2] D. M. Condit, A Counterinsurgency Bibliography (Washington, D.C.: The American University, 1963), p. xii.

[3] U.S., Department of the Army, Counterguerrilla Operations, Field Manual 31-16, 24 March 1967, p. 4.

This 1967 publication defined "Internal Defense" in the following manner:

> . . . the full range of measures taken by a constituted government and its allies to free and protect its society from subversion, lawlessness, and insurgency.[1] (Emphasis added.)

While, "Internal Development" was defined as:

> . . . the strengthening of the roots, functions, and capabilities of government and the viability of the national life of a country toward the end of internal independence and freedom from conditions fostering insurgency.[2] (Emphasis added.)

The most current U.S. Army publication has dropped the term "stability operations"; has modified or changed the terms "Internal Defense and Development" (IDAD); and has added a new term, "Foreign Internal Defense" (FID). The definition of "Internal Defense" is the same as in 1967 except for the deletion of "constituted" and "and its allies." Internal Development is now defined as:

> . . . actions taken by a nation to promote its growth by building viable institutions--political, military, economic, and social--that respond to the needs of its society.[3] (Emphasis added.)

The new term, "Foreign Internal Defense", is defined as the:

> . . . participation by civilian and military agencies of a government in any of the action programs taken by another government to

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[1]Ibid., p. 10.

[2]Ibid.

[3]U. S., Department of the Army, Low Intensity Conflict, Field Manual 100-20, 16 January 1981, p. 14.

free and protect its society from subversion, lawlessness, and insurgency.[1]

Emphasis has been added to these definitions because this study will discuss some of the specific short comings of counterinsurgency which relate to El Salvador. Specifically this study will review the fault of policy not properly following the guidance of these goals. An examination of these definitions shows a departure from a strict action which emphasizes "preventing and suppressing resistance groups" to action which emphasizes nation building; as had been the case under the Kennedy administration. The irony is that present and past administrations stressed objectives which were more in agreement with each others' definitions. That is to say, the goals of President Reagan are more in line with the definition of counterinsurgency in the early sixties; while President Kennedy's are similar to modern day terms. On the positive side, one can perhaps, detect a more pronounced effort by the military to recognize the limits of military action and the importance of civic action in an effective counterinsurgency. However, the general consensus still seems to be that military operations are the key to successful counterinsurgency. A recent article co-written by Col. John D. Waghelstein, states that "all that the Salvadoran armed forces . . . require from us to defeat the insurgency is a supporting budget of about $100 million a year, which would be used for training programs and basic equipment. . . ."[2]

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[1]Ibid.

[2]Alvin H. Bernstein and Col. John D. Waghelstein, "How to Win in El Salvador," Policy Review, Winter 1984, p. 50.

> . . . the effort to keep the Marxist-Leninist guerrilla force from shooting its way into power will depend upon interdicting the guerrillas' supply routes; . . . locating his enemy's base camps; . . . and then he must be damaged.[1]

This strategy must be backed by a well-trained officer corps, well-drilled troops, and proper equipment.[2]

> Victory in El Salvador requires patience: It may take several years to build up an officer corps and counterinsurgency force sufficient to wear the guerrillas down. But Marxist-Leninist guerrillas have been defeated in countries ranging from Venezuela to Greece to Thailand. They can also be defeated at little American cost in El Salvador.[3]

Modern U.S. Army doctrinal manuals recognize this consensus but appear to want to depart from this view. A look at modern IDAD and FID concepts and doctrine discussed in the following chapter will reflect this attitude.

In retrospect, the history of U.S. involvement in Latin America counterinsurgency since the sixties was an offshoot of the programs of the Alliance for Progress. Though a positive result of U.S. sponsored counterinsurgency has been the reduction in the effectiveness of insurgent movements, a negative result has been an increase in the strength of foreign military groups at the expense of the democratic government process. The eagerness of the Latin American military to uphold oligarchical interests and actively participate, usually at the point of the bayonet, in the politics of their respective governments, appears to be an acceptable solution to U.S. policy makers in defeating insurgencies.

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[1]Ibid., pp. 50-2. [2]Ibid., p. 51. [3]Ibid., p. 52.

CHAPTER III

INTERNAL DEFENSE AND DEVELOPMENT AND FOREIGN

INTERNAL DEFENSE CONCEPTS AND DOCTRINE

The fundamental thrust of IDAD doctrine is toward preventing insurgencies from escalating to where they present a major threat. Prevention is accomplished through forestalling and defeating the threat posed by insurgent organizations and by working at correction of conditions that prompt violence. The population must be mobilized to participate in internal defense and development efforts. Together, internal defense and internal development form an overall strategy for prevention or defeat of insurgency.[1] (Emphasis added.)

IDAD strategy involves the art and science of developing and using the political, economic, psychological, and military powers of a government, including all police and internal security forces, to prevent or defeat insurgency. The US concept is based on the strategy of simultaneous internal defense and internal development programs. The primary objective under this strategy normally will be a level of internal security which will permit economic, political, and social growth through balanced development programs. It is directed toward both the populace and insurgent.[2] (Emphasis added.)

IDAD . . . may be placed in useful perspective by viewing IDAD strategy as being composed of three interdependent components; balanced development, mobilization, and neutralization. Balanced development attempts to achieve national goals through balanced political, social, economic development. It includes activities to alleviate frustration by providing opportunities to individuals and groups within the society. Mobilization includes all activities to motivate and organize the populace in support of the government through IDAD programs as well as activities to protect the populace from insurgent actions. Neutralization includes all lawful activities to disrupt, disorganize, and defeat an insurgent organization.[3] (Emphasis added.)

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[1] Low Intentity Conflict, Field Manual 100-20, p. 45.

[2] Ibid., p. 46.

[3] Ibid., p. 48.

> Initially, the US effort will be directed toward assessing the threat to the host government and to US INTERESTS. The "country team," under the direction of the chief of the US diplomatic mission, normally an ambassador, will assess the situation in-country and recommend what level US assistance, if any, should be provided. If the HOST COUNTRY REQUESTS support and US INTERESTS Is [sic] INVOLVED, the US NATIONAL COMMAND AUTHORITIES may direct the US Army to participate in FID operations.[1] (Emphasis from original text.)

> When the insurgency level of intensity is in Phase I . . . [Latent and incipient insurgency], the United States may assist through a security assistance program designed to strengthen the indigenous capability to deal with an insurgency. . . .[2]

> In a Phase II . . . [guerrilla warfare] insurgency situation, US assistance efforts would of necessity, probably, be of a higher level. The United States could provide equipment; training; and, under some circumstances, unit advisors and support for indigenous forces. . . .[3]

> In a Phase III [War of Movement] insurgency situation, expanded US assistance may include selected and specially tailored US combat forces. . . .[4]

Conceptually, U.S. counterinsurgency doctrine establishes, what seems to be an appropriate plan of action to counter a struggle of this nature. It is logical and straightforward, and identifies the necessary balance between military and civic action. Basically, it is founded on the premise that " . . . a governing power can defeat any revolutionary movement if it adapts the revolutionary strategy and principles [Mao, Giap, Guevara, etc.] and applies them in reverse. . . ."[5]

The next chapters will move from an examination of the concepts of this doctrine, to an assessment of its application. To achieve this

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[1]Ibid., p. 16. [2]Ibid. [3]Ibid., p. 17. [4]Ibid.

[5]John J. McCuen, The Art of Counter-Revolutionary War: The Strategy of Counter-insurgency (Harrisburg: Stackpole Co., 1966), pp. 28-9.

the study will now examine the program which is the model for the National Plan for El Salvador: Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support (CORDS).

CHAPTER IV

CIVIL OPERATIONS AND REVOLUTIONARY DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT

From 1967 to 1971 (some sources say 1972), "pacification," as the counterinsurgency programs were formally referred to in the Republic of Vietnam (RVN), took on a new priority and dimension exceeding previous years. Robert Komer, a former National Security Council staff member, was the chief architect of this new emphasis and the resulting "New Model" pacification program. Through his efforts, various government agencies responsible for pacification were reorganized into a new civil-military organizational structure called CORDS.[1] CORDS successfully combined existing civilian programs with the military facilities and the military advisory function of the Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV).[2]

Beginning at the top of the civil-military organization was a commander who was provided a staff in MACV.[3] This staff was responsible to the commander's deputy, a civilian with a rank of ambassador. Below this organization were four Corps commanders which had CORDS personnel serving as their deputies. Below the corps command were provincial and district chiefs who were either civilian or military. They were responsible for all civil-military personnel and operations in their respective regions and answered through the chain of command

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[1]Blaufarb, p. 235. [2]Ibid., p. 240. [3]Ibid., p. 241.

to the CORDS commander.[1]

The result of CORDS' reorganization was a unification of several programs under one management system that was able to effectively extend its advice, guidance, and control over 250 districts and many of the 12,000 hamlets in RVN.[2]

According to Komer, the concept of CORDS was similar to previous pacification programs in that it served two primary purposes: The first was the sustained protection of the rural population (area security) from Viet Cong (VC) guerrillas. The object was to deprive the VC of their rural popular support. The second purpose was to create government support in the rural areas through civic action programs (pacification). Simultaneously, it was important to attempt to neutralize the rural insurgent forces and their infrastructure (counter-infrastructure). The hope was that CORDS would politically diffuse any leftist tendencies in the population and would move the countryside politically and administratively to the political center. This could only be achieved through a proper combination of civil and military assets.[3] Although the concept was basically the same as previous efforts, the degree of effort undertaken and the comprehensive nature of CORDS made it unique in practice.

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[1]Ibid.

[2]Richard H. Shultz, "Reassessing U.S. Strategy in Vietnam: Past Lessons and Future Planning," International Security Review, Winter 1980-81, p. 516.

[3]Robert W. Komer, "Was There Another Way?," The Lessons of Vietnam, W. Scott Thompson and Donald D. Frizzel, eds. (New York: Crane, Russak, and Co., 1977), p. 214.

A problem confronting the Salvadoran armed forces is its inability to control the countryside due to its small overall strength. With respect to area security in Vietnam, RVN forces also required significant improvement and expansion. Not only did the size of Vietnamese forces have to be increased by 1.13 to 1.18 million soldiers, but the quality of leadership, equipment, and training needed vast improvements.[1] Area security had to be a total commitment by the armed forces. It meant the physical occupation of an area as well as its control. Area control required the "physical, psychological, and the political mobilization of the populace in the area in order to actively support the regime."[2] To be a successful program it was necessary to establish both of these within the area.

Pacification was aimed at developing effective civic action programs through "effective rural administration, . . . rural economic revival (including land reform) and . . . providing essential rural services."[3]

Counter-infrastructure served the purpose of weakening the VC's internal organization. Two programs were instituted to achieve this, "Chieu Hoi" and "Phung Hoang." Chieu Hoi or Open Arms induced the VC to surrender through positive incentives. Phung Hoang or Phoenix was designed to eliminate VC cadre or supporters through assassination (neutralization).[4] However, it was <u>not</u>, as commonly thought:

> . . . a program of systematic political assassination; the vast majority recorded or killed were slain by GVN (Government of Vietnam) military forces in the course of military operations. These were

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[1]Schultz, p. 515. [2]Ibid. [3]Ibid., p. 516. [4]Ibid.

not even targeted on individuals, who were only subsequently identified as VC infrastructure cadre.[1]

As previously mentioned, the CORDS sponsored program was not a new pacification program, but an improvement on earlier ones. Its strength was attributed to the consolidation of leadership and supervisory channels. It borrowed from the pre-cursor of CORDS, the Revolutionary Development (RD) program of 1965-67. The basis of RD was a national corps of specialists or cadre who formed the framework for civic action and security down to hamlet level. RD worked in the following manner: After the Army had cleared an area of VC, which, as in El Salvador, was not always successful, a fifty-nine man team would enter a hamlet. Thirty-five members of the team made up the security element responsible for establishing the hamlet's defense, to include training and forming a popular force.[2] The priority for establishing security was later expanded to include forty to fifty RVN army battalions within the RD campaign area. The other twenty-five team members made up the civic action element which was responsible for organizing a new hamlet government: establishing literacy programs, agricultural training and assistance, and schools; developing a public works program; organizing land reform; compiling a census; issuing identification cards; and tending to local grievances.[3] Additional responsibilities of the team were collection of intelligence on VC acitivity and supports and, the conduct of propaganda and psychological

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[1]Komer, p. 217. [2]Blaufarb, pp. 227-8. [3]Ibid.

operations.[1] In about six months the team would complete its mission and move on to another hamlet to begin its activities all over again.

Return trips to hamlets were scheduled to check on progress and to supervise the on-going civil and military programs. The entire operation of the teams was coordinated and managed at provincial level. A special cadre control group worked out of the provincial capital alongside the province chief to insure steady support from provincial officials.[2] The operation was coordinated so that the paramilitary hamlet self defense system was tied into a defense network of all the hamlets within the province.

In 1970 the civic action effort of CORDS was aided by the decision of the RVN government to carry out land reform on a scale larger than previous years. "In little over a year, over 900,000 acres were distributed free to some 300,000 families. . . . By 1973, well over half the population had already benefitted from land reform. . . ."[3]

The impact of the CORDS program will be the topic of discussion in the next chapter.

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[1]Ibid., p. 228. [2]Ibid., p. 229. [3]Komer, p. 218.

CHAPTER V

AN EVALUATION OF CORDS SPONSORED PACIFICATION

> The story of the CORDS phase of pacification is . . . the story of how the Americans organized, managed and implemented an effort to induce the Vietnamese to do the right kind of things so as to secure the countryside and gain the willing support of the rural population.[1]

How successful was it in achieving this purpose? Optimistic figures stated that by 1970 over ninety percent of the hamlets were at least relatively secure as a result of the programs.[2] (Emphasis added.)

> . . . the figures for the end of 1971 rate about 97 percent of South Vietnam's 17.9 million population as 'relatively secure', and 3 percent as 'contested', and only about 7,000 proper as still under wholly 'VC control'.[3]

These figures can be compared with those from early 1967 when only sixty-two percent of sixteen million people were relatively secure, 18.5 percent were contested, and nineteen percent were VC controlled. Still earlier at the end of 1964 only forty percent of the population of RVN was considered as being under government control.[4] Komer sums up his view of the progress of the programs in these words:

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[1]Blaufarb, p. 243.

[2]Stephen P. Rosen, "Vietnam and the American Theory of Limited War," International Security, Fall 1982, p. 103.

[3]Komer, p. 220.

[4]Ibid.

> Whatever one's prejudices as to the precision of these figures, there is little doubt that GVN domination of the countryside expanded rapidly after late 1968 at the expense of the Viet Cong-controlled population base, with inevitable efforts on Viet Cong recruiting capabilities. . . . Lastly, pacification spurred what amounted to a GVN-sponsored rural revolution. Politically, socially, and economically, the traditional face of the countryside was transformed, not just by war but by radical land reform, economic revival, new transport networks, more communications, revived local autonomy, and other GVN measures aimed at competing with the VC attempt at political revolution. . . . The gathering weight of evidence indicates that the 1967-71 pacification program, with all its flaws and weaknesses, contributed greatly at least to short-run GVN ability to cope with rural insurgency. . . ."[1] (Emphasis added.)

On the other side of the coin is information which challenges Komer's positive outlook. This information criticizes the reliability of the reports versus the reality of the situation. A case in point is the question on how percentage figures of "controlled" or "contested areas" were derived.

For the purpose of providing a means of evaluation, a management system under CORDS was developed known as the Hamlet Evaluation System (HES). HES provided monthly evaluations of 2,000 villages and 12,000 hamlets in RVN, by 220 specially selected U.S. civilian and military personnel known as District Senior Advisors (DSA). This somewhat subjective evaluation was based on a questionnaire related to security, political, economic, and social factors.[2] It attempted to solve the problem of measuring the progress of pacification. Men like Komer depended on these progress reports to base their argument about the success of pacification.

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[1] Ibid., pp. 220-22.

[2] Shultz, p. 516.

Under the surface, however, things were not as positive as depicted. Based on various analyses of the military and political situation in RVN at the time of the U.S. withdrawal, some provinces described as "secure" were in fact involved in rather serious problems dealing with their own security.[1] Conclusions can be derived which show that the countryside of RVN was "far from being in the hands of the GVN."[2] Apparently the reliability of HES reports was questionable. The DSA's felt that HES scores were inflated. "In fact, almost two-thirds of the final group of DSA's believed that HES did not represent the situation on the ground."[3] The fighting potential of the VC was underrated in some districts.

HES may have become a bureaucratic paper shuffle in the long run, collapsing under the pressure of a system that advocated success of the program.[4] If the supervisors wanted to see the success of the program, then success they saw, all on paper.[5] HES:

> . . . would produce the kind of information desired by the regime with little reference to actuality. . . . The Vietnamese apparatus could not cope with the reality of its problems in the countryside for the system, in effect, did not wish to know and confront the hard facts.[6]

The foregoing overview has been a presentation of the two opposing views regarding the success of pacification under CORDS. However, the impact of the programs have yet to be determined. The general

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[1] Ibid., p. 522. [2] Ibid., p. 523. [3] Ibid.

[4] Blaufarb, p. 249. [5] Ibid. [6] Ibid.

consensus indicates that under CORDS, the GVN did experience a certain margin of success. The GVN did experience an improvement in the security of the countryside, even if only slight.

> To sum up, by 1970 a considerable measure of security had been restored and the ability of the insurgency to affect events, to mobilize the population, to fight tax, and recruitment had been eroded to the point where it was a manageable threat. . . .[1]

One question, of course, is whether this measure of security was attributed directly to CORDS or other factors. Some experts contend that the limited success of CORDS can be attributed in part to the 1968 Tet Offensive and its devastating effects on the moral and fighting strength of the VC. Though its impact cannot be measured, the GVN wisely followed up on the VC gamble by placing a renewed interest and commitment to pacification. The U.S. contributed to the process by developing an organization with programs which realized marked gains. It was this combination that reflected the limited success of the program.[2]

It is for this reason that some experts conclude that RVN was lost as a result of a conventional war waged by North Vietnam. The U.S. and GVN won the unconventional war by eliminating the VC as a serious threat to security.[3] Of course on the other hand, it can be argued that the rapid fall of RVN during North Vietnamese Army's 1975 full-scale attack could be attributed to the inability of the program

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[1]Ibid., p. 270.

[2]Ibid., p. 271.

[3]W. Scott Thompson and Donaldson O. Frizzell, eds., The Lessons of Vietnam (New York: Crane, Russak and Co., 1977), p. 279.

to provide GVN with the control and influence over the countryside.[1]

This entire issue is a question of degree. It cannot be proven that the CORDS program was a failure. The bulk of evidence seems to repudiate this view. However, CORDS limited progress may have been influenced by several factors already discussed: such as the 1968 Tet Offensive; the problem with HES; and to a certain extent the impact of land reform. Unfortunately, as a result of these factors it is difficult to clearly demonstrate the success or merits of the program. What the program did have in its favor was a characteristic of U.S. counterinsurgency doctrine. Conceptually, its strategy made it an appropriate plan of action for a conflict of this nature. "On paper, counterinsurgency seems both logical and practical."[2] It made "sense" to deal with this insurgency with an equally determined counterinsurgency plan.[3]

The question most important at this time is whether the CORDS model can be transferred to El Salvador and if it can be expected to have a similar degree of success. To insure even the slightest progress, however, the plan must be followed exactly to the letter. Each phase of the plan is so interdependent on the other that the failure of any portion could spell disaster for the overall program. For example, if the security phase does not achieve its purpose of clearing an area and maintaining it free of guerrilla activity, then the civic action phase will run into resistance. Furthermore, if the security phase is effective, but funding does not adequately provide for the necessary development and supplies and training of civilian health and welfare technicians,

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[1]Shultz, p. 530. [2]Simpson., p. 67 [3]Ibid., p. 529.

then the program will not achieve pacification. If every town cannot have a popular force that is adequately armed and trained, then securing the countryside becomes an immense task for the regular army. The point being stressed is that the question of success or failure at the grass roots level is one of fundamentals. If the Salvadoran government cannot implement the fundamentals of a counterinsurgency plan, then the entire effort cannot be expected to work as designed.

Although it is too early to tell, observers in El Salvador report that six months after implementation of the National Plan results do not look encouraging.[1] However, it will take much longer to properly assess the overall results. In defense of the Plan, "if one tries to talk about speed in pacification, it must be remembered that it will take as long to get back to the preferred 'status quo ante' as it took the other side to get to the new position."[2]

If the National Plan were to be evaluated on the development of an "ideal" counterinsurgency model, resulting from the Vietnam experience, then fundamentals alone do not translate to success in practice. Implementing fundamentals may produce short term gains, however, success is ultimately measured in the long term accomplishment of the national goals and objectives of the plan. To achieve the ultimate goal of defeating the insurgency, ideally a counterinsurgency plan must realistically confront the heart of the insurgent issues. Cosmetic changes designed to only improve the material well being of the populace will

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[1]Chavez, "U.S. Pilot Program," p. 1.

[2]Robert Thompson, "Would the Other Way Have Worked?," The Lessons of Vietnam, W. Scott Thompson and Donaldson O. Frizzell, eds. (New York: Crane, Russak and Co., 1977), pp. 223-26.

probably only produce positive results in the short run. The authors of U.S. counterinsurgency doctrine themselves recognize this requirement for success when they write:

> The fundamental thrust of IDAD doctrine is toward preventing insurgencies from escalating to where they present a major threat. Prevention is accomplished through forestalling and defeating the threat posed by insurgent organizations and by working at correction of conditions that prompt violence.[1] (Emphasis added.)

Herein lies one of the requirements for success; the requirement to effectively counter the insurgent threat. By "correction of conditions that prompt violence," the National Plan, or any effective counterinsurgency plan, will enhance its chances of success in the long run. Basically, what is being affirmed is that the issues at the heart of the insurgency must be addressed by the Salvadoran government so the projects can succeed at the village level. For example, if agrarian reform is a major national issue, then theoretically, no amount of civic developmental projects will appease the landless. If a lack of respect for human rights happens to be a major national issue, as the case happens to be in El Salvador, then no amount of civic action projects will deter irresponsible government officials or death squad members.

A problem with counterinsurgency is the assumption that the rural populace is either ignorant of political issues or that their loyalty can somehow be purchased with humanitarian programs which form the basis of the civic action portion of the National Campaign Plan. Failure to

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[1] Low Intensity Conflict, Field Manual 100-20, p. 13.

recognize the real issues of the insurgency is a failure to apply revolutionary strategy and principles in reverse. In an effort to identify the real problems and primary issues of the insurgent cause, Chapter VII of this study will examine some aspects of the political platform of the Salvadoran leftist opposition.

Counterinsurgency plans which lose sight of the real problems will tend to adopt "short-term 'ad hoc' measures merely as reactions to insurgent initiative or with the limited aim of attempting to defeat the insurgent militarily in the guerrilla phase."[1] If the National Campaign Plan for El Salvador is following this strategy, then the problem with the plan may be its application as opposed to its concept.

In addition to confronting the real problems at the heart of the insurgency, an effective counterinsurgency plan should ideally reach deeper. It must confront the intangible issues of social values and human pride:

> When the matter involved was in the category of incremental village improvements--a paved road, a small canal, a dispensary--it had little real impact unless the peasant saw the need himself and could influence the choice of improvement and details of location, material, and the like. . . . If this were done in the right way, it could eventually have the desired effect. All too often, however, the pleasants were manipulated or merely pushed aside. They were presented with a gift and expected to be suitably grateful even though they may have preferred something else or the location interfered with convenience or custom or they really did not see the need for improvement at all. The help provided did nothing to strengthen loyalty because the process merely reinforced the villagers feelings of helplessness. . . . Efforts to improve standards of living in the countryside were irrelevant unless they also reduced the villager's sense of insecurity that came from feeling defenseless in a hostile world, whereas the desired feelings could be produced by means which

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[1]Sir Robert Thompson, Defeating Communist Insurgency: The Lessons Malaya and Vietnam (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Inc., 1966), p. 52.

> did little to improve the standard of living. Thus, if a villager whose daughter had been abused or whose chickens had been stolen . . . could report the matter to company headquarters and receive restitution or see the culprit punished, his personal sense of worth and his respect for the system that defended it were strenghtened. This effect was obtained at no or little cost yet it had more real consequence for village attitudes than an expensive public-works project carried out arbitrarily.[1]

To shed light on this aspect of the problem, the study will take a second look at CORDS from the point of view of what it failed to accomplish.

It can be argued that " . . . while the CORDS effort may have been a short-term success, it had serious long-term disadvantages."[2]

> . . . neither in 1970 nor afterward was the VC apparatus--the infrastructure--dismantled or destroyed. It retained its structural integrity, albeit at far lower levels of strength and capability. And it still managed in a variety of ways to impress upon the population that it lurked in the wings, an alternative authority which could again become a threat.[3]

Additionally, one of the aims of the CORDS program was to gain the willing support of the population. As mentioned before, this goal is paramount in a successful counterinsurgency. Independent observers have concluded that, although the VC lost a great portion of their hold on the population, the government, in spite of its programs, was not able to earn the position as the replacement recipient of the loyalty of the people:[4]

> . . . the villagers still saw themselves as being in the grasp of an alien power structure with little legal recourse. The ability of

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[1]Blaufarb, p. 219. [2]Summers, p. 175. [3]Blaufarb, pp. 270-1.

[4]Ibid., p. 271.

> the peasants to influence the terms that shaped their lives was still severely circumscribed despite manifest improvements at the village level.[1]
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> The gap between peasant and urbanized army officer still existed. Favoritism, corruption, and manipulation of the laws for private purposes were the rule in this system. . . . The government . . . failed . . . to create among the peasantry a strong, positive motivation to engage in the struggle on the official side.[2]
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> . . . the deep-seated problems of rural life in Vietnam . . . could only have been solved by providing the villagers with political levers linked to the national political process. . . . This failure lays bare in stark outline the basic dilemma implicit in counterinsurgency policy which has never seriously grappled with by U.S. policymakers, a matter which goes far from beyond the programmatic and organizational question that preoccupied the national security community. . . . Effective programs require governmental stability, but successful counterinsurgency requires granting the rural population a strong voice in its own affairs. Steps toward the latter appear to threaten the former and are usually pushed aside with ultimately disastrous effects on counterinsurgency. . . . The tragic collapse of South Vietnam was ultimately a product of the crucial difficulty . . . of reforming and distributing power in a political system under severe stress.[3]

If this evaluation of the prime failures of CORDS is, in fact, a realistic assessment of a counterinsurgency weakness, will this also be the fate of the program in El Salvador? Of course, this question cannot be answered in all certainty, but the points covered thus far seem to indicate that glaring problems must be grappled with to insure a margin of success. Whether this appears to be the case in El Salvador will be the subject of discussion in the next chapters.

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[1]Ibid., p. 272. [2]Ibid. [3]Ibid., pp. 277-8.

CHAPTER VI

THE PROBLEM OF GOVERNMENT AND REFORM

The subjects of government and reform are two areas previously mentioned that deserve further discussion and re-emphasis. The premise cannot be denied that U.S. counterinsurgency principles and doctrine must take into account the particulars of a given country and flexibly adapt them to the unique situation. This is a natural common sense approach for any policy. What is questionable is whether or not U.S. counterinsurgency doctrine is emphasizing certain principles which may be key pre-conditions to success and which may have possibly been violated in Vietnam.

Sir Robert Thompson, the well-known British counterinsurgency expert, suggests that, to be successful the issue concerning government stability is a basic principle which a government must adhere to when involved in a counterinsurgency. According to him, all of the government's counterinsurgency measures must fall within the lines of these principles.[1] Two of these principles are particularly significant because, ironically, their importance does not appear to be stressed in U.S. counterinsurgency doctrine. The first principle states that "the government must have a clear political aim: to establish and maintain a free, independent, and united country which is politically and

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[1] Thompson, Defeating Communist Insurgency, p. 50.

and economically stable and viable."[1] (Emphasis added.) Additionally he goes on to say that:

> It would be futile to succeed in defeating the insurgency, especially by military means alone during its guerrilla phase, if the result is a country which is not politically and economically viable. . . .[2] Without a reasonably efficient government machine, no programmes or projects, in the context of counter-insurgency, will produce the desired results.[3]

Along these same lines, another authority on counterinsurgency states that the administration "must be established on a person-to-person basis which is responsive to the needs of the people and readily apparent to them."[4] (Emphasis added.) Additionally, . . . its political base must extend well beyond its military elite."[5] The issue of responsiveness to the people was cited earlier in the definition of Internal Development.

Linked to the first principle is the second principle. It states that "the government must function in accordance with law."[6] The importance of this principle cannot be overly emphasized:

> A government which does not act in accordance with the law forfeits the right to be called a government and cannot then expect its people to obey the law. Functioning in accordance with the law is a very small price to pay in return for the advantage of being the government.[7]
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> If the government does not adhere to the law, then it loses respect and fails to fulfill its contractual obligation to the people as a government. This leads to the situation in which officers and

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[1] Ibid., pp. 50-1. [2] Ibid., p. 51. [3] Ibid. [4] McCuen, p. 85.

[5] Ibid. [6] Thompson, p. 52. [7] Ibid., pp. 52-3.

> officials cease to be responsible for their actions, with the result that, instead of an insurgency, there is to all intents and purposes a civil war within the country in which neither side can claim to be the government. In such circumstances there is so little difference between the two sides that the people have no reason for choosing to support the government.[1]

Failure of the Salvadoran government to meet this criteria could affect the overall counterinsurgency effort. It appears difficult for U.S. policy makers to accept this principal aspect of counterinsurgency. Theoretically, one cannot expect the Salvadoran military and civilian civic action workers to shoulder the brunt of this effort if the government is not viable or working within the law. A counterinsurgency plan must involve the central government at the highest levels, not just the persons responsible for carrying out the program at department and village level:

> An essential component of any organizational effort by a government is forging a sense of loyalty between itself and the people. . . .[2] To be successful, the counterinsurgency forces need the <u>firm backing of their government</u> and people.[3] (Emphasis added.)

It may be that the lessons from Vietnam-style counterinsurgency mentioned previously, have not been learned.

If the many reports of political repression, unauthorized detentions, overall violations of human rights, and murders by death squads

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[1]Ibid., p. 54.

[2]Bard E. O'Neill, William R. Heaton, and Donald J. Alberts, eds., "Insurgency: A Framework for Analysis," <u>Insurgency in the Modern World</u> (Boulder: Westview Press, 1980), p. 22.

[3]Ibid., p. 26.

allegedly led by members of the Salvadoran government[1] are taken to be factual accounts of the conditions in El Salvador, then Thompson's basic principles on government behavior are being violated. The United States recently refused to grant an entry visa to Robert d'Aubuisson, former president of the Salvadoran National Constituent Assembly and candidate to the Salvadoran presidency. Denial for his alleged involvement in death squad activities[2] speaks clearly of this problem. Regardless of the validity of these accusations, the important thing is that the image of the government as a true law abiding body has been tarnished. This severely restricts the progress of the National Campaign Plan to win the support of the Salvadoran people. The National Plan must be more than a propaganda device or a token effort. If counterinsurgency is to succeed at the grass roots level, where the emphasis is being placed to counter the guerrilla threat, then the structure of the government must undergo a parallel improvement.

Herein lies another pitfall of U.S. counterinsurgency doctrine. It assumes that the U.S. government is capable of creating reforms within the host country. From this point of view U.S. counterinsurgency is no different than the doctrinal apparatus of the sixties. Counterinsurgency

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[1]Amnesty International, U.S.A., "Repression in El Salvador," El Salvador: Central America in the New Cold War, Marvin E. Gettleman, et al., eds. (New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1981), pp. 152-56; Jenny Pearce, Under the Eagle, with a forward by Richard Gott (Boston: South End Press, 1982), pp. 228-29; Robert Armstrong and Janet Shenk, El Salvador: The Face of Revolution (Boston: South End Press, 1982), pp. 148-49 and Enrique A. Baloyra, El Salvador in Transition (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1982), pp. 130-31.

[2]"A Turn for the Worse," Newsweek, 12 December 1983, p. 54.

then as today dealt:

> . . . relatively little with the profounder and more significant problems of concept and doctrine. For example, there was an assumption implicit in the approach as it related to the realities of politics within the threatened countries. Much reliance was placed in the ability of U.S. representatives to persuade indigenous governments to do two things: first, to improve and strengthen their administration of government, notably in security, but also in other relevant fields; and secondly, to carry out reforms to satisfy popular needs and undercut Communist appeals. The assumption was that these were primarily technical matters of improving administration and identifying more popular policies, and that technically skilled and persuasive American representatives would readily succeed in such a task.[1]

A case in point are the efforts by the United States government to shape the Salvadoran Army into an effective fighting force. Is this a realistic and viable plan of action? It might be if the United States is dealing with a professional military which shares a similar sense of professional dedication to duty. The Salvadoran military is a politicized organization. This translates to a military that generally has a low level of combat fighting effectiveness.[2] The reasons for this are internal. Promotions are obtained by demonstrated political loyalty, not military competence. Those officers that are both loyal and competent are closely watched because of the potential threat posed by their possible disillusionment with the current government.[3] The virtual corruption and incompetence of the officer corps

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[1]Blaufarb, p. 86.

[2]Ernest Evans, "The Key Military Issues in the War in El Salvador," Conflict Quarterly, Spring/Summer 1982, p. 6.

[3]Ibid., p. 7.

unfortunately influences the enlisted ranks and results in low morale ~~morale~~ and a lack of dedication. These armies can fall apart and cease to be cohesive fighting units if under pressure.[1] "Politicized military forces, because they lack high standards of professionalism, are much more prone to disintegrate than are professional armies."[2] Examples of this are the demise of Batista's military during the Cuban Revolution and Somoza's National Guard during Nicaragua's Sandinista Revolution.[3] A case could be made that for religious ideological reasons the Lebanese Army in Beirut has similarly declined.

"It is extremely difficult for an outside power to try to reform and restructure such a politicized military force so as to make it more effective."[4] This presents a dilemma for the dedicated U.S. advisors in El Salvador who are sincerely attempting to fulfill their responsibilities. The problem, however, is not unique to the U.S. advisory effort. Witness the failure of Soviet, Cuban, and East European advisors in Angola and Soviet assistance and subsequent intervention in Afghanistan.[5]

Is it even realistic to expect a government to improve its military institutions and its administration?

> Improved administration as well as--more obviously--social reform are thoroughly entangled with the distribution of power and rewards in most societies, and this seems to be especially true of regions which are underdeveloped not only economically but, as is usually

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[1] Ibid., p. 8. [2] Ibid., p. 7. [3] Ibid., p. 8.

[4] Ibid., p. 7. [5] Ibid.

> the case, politically as well. Such regimes, and particularly military dictatorships--which rely heavily on the leadership of the armed forces and the police for their political base--usually survive by purchasing the loyalty of their subordinates with patronage and by balancing powerful satraps off against each other to prevent collision. As a result, the quality of performance has little to do with continuance in office and is often low. When, in response to counterinsurgency doctrine, the U.S. called upon a threatened government to carry out a program of self-reform in the midst of crisis, it seems to be insisting that the regime jeopardize its hold on power in order to defeat the Communists. To the ruling group this was no mere technical question but one of survival, for, not unnaturally, the members placed their continued hold on power ahead of defeating the Communists, whereas, in the U.S. view, the priorities were reversed. . . . The measures we advocate may strike at the very foundations of those aspects of a government's social structure and domestic economy on which rests the basis of government's control. This problem of self-reform in the midst of crisis is one of the factors which lay like a concealed mine in the path of the counterinsurgency program in many of the countries.[1]

As difficult as it may be, a government attempting reform increases the chance of a successful counterinsurgency. An example of a government reforming in the midst of an insurgency is the case of the Philippine insurgency during the forties and fifties.[2] The reforms engineered by Ramon Magsaysay as chairman of the Committee on National Defense and later as president of the Philippines, led to the cementing of popular support for the government cause.[3] The 1970 RVN land reform program can also be viewed as achieving some margin of success but, unfortunately, it was not sufficient in itself to forestall the national problems faced by the government.

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[1]Blaufarb, pp. 86-87.

[2]O'Neill, Heaton and Alberts, p. 21.

[3]Ibid.

CHAPTER VII

AT THE HEART OF THE INSURGENCY: POPULAR GRIEVANCES

Recognizing the importance of governmental structural change is only half the battle. The government must take the process of self-improvement further into other areas. As was previously mentioned, it must take a serious look at the population's basic grievances which form the heart of the insurgent cause and its popularity with the sectors of the population that support it. Just like the situation which existed in Vietnam, without a genuine cause there can be no insurgency. Earlier it was stated that theoretically, the real national problems must be addressed for the overall counterinsurgency plan to be successful. Devising a program to satisfy the grievances of the population is, of course, no easy undertaking, especially for a developing nation with a paucity of resources."[1] It is important that an honest effort be made to solve these issues. The government must do so because the insurgents will effectively use those grievances to amass popular support; just as the VC had done in Vietnam.[2]

In the eyes of the insurgents, what are the issues which form the basis of the insurgency in El Salvador? In 1980 the Revolutionary Coordinating Council of the Masses (CRM), a United front for the opposition's popular organizations, issued the program that was to

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[1] O'Neill, p. 21.

[2] Blaufarb, p. 97.

become the platform for the insurgency.[1] This same platform was later to become the rallying cause for the umbrella organization of the leftist Salvadoran opposition, the Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR),[2] and the main guerrilla organization, the Farabundo Marti Front for National Liberation (FMLN).[3] Generally speaking the platform consisted of a list of recommendations for social, structural, economic and political changes. Social changes included a literacy campaign, a national health system, and low-cost housing. Structural and economic changes included a nationalized electrical distribution system and more progressive agrarian reform programs. Political changes included a halt to national repression and a dissolution of repressive organizations.[4]

Once again the contention is that if the Salvadoran government were to yield to some of these demands and work toward the obtainment of others it would deprive the guerrillas of a cause, assuming all other requirements of an effective counterinsurgency effort are followed. In essense these actions will "take the wind out of the sails" of the insurgents' cause.

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[1]Platform of the Revolutionary Democratic Government," El Salvador: Central America in the New Cold War, Marvin E. Gettleman et al., eds. (New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1981), p. 120.

[2]Armstrong, pp. 153-54.

[3]"The Role of Unity in the Revolutionary War: An Interview with Juan Chacon," Revolution and Intervention in Central America, Marlene Dixon and Susanne Jonas, eds. (San Francisco: Synthesis Publications, 1983), p. 44; Robert Armstrong and Janet Shenk, "El Salvador: A Revolution Brews," Revolution in Central America, (Boulder: Westview Press, Inc., 1983), p. 64.

[4]Gettleman, p. 120.

However, some of these demands shake the higher echelons of government and the oligarchy which allegedly influences government decision making.[1] As stated previously, "the measures . . . [that the U.S.] advocates may strike at the very foundation of a government's social structure and domestic economy on which rests the basis of government control."[2] Though this may be a difficult decision for the government, the basis of the FDR's platform advocates these measures.

If the FDR has a more realistic perspective of the problems of the country, the movement will probably continue to amass support despite government programs aimed at preventing it. An example of this can be found in an analysis of similar issues in Vietnam.

Since land reform was an issue in Vietnam, as it is in El Salvador, the VC redistributed land in areas under their control. This demonstrated the ability of the insurgents to meet their pledges to the people.[3] It also achieved a victory in amassing support for the movement. In El Salvador, thus far, reports do not indicate that the guerrillas have attempted systematic land redistribution. However, land abandoned by wealthy landowners is plowed by the landless with the encouragement of the guerrillas.[4] Roy Prosterman, who was the master-mind behind Vietnam agrarian reform, the Land-to-the-Tiller program, and who has acted as an unpaid advisor to the Salvadoran

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[1]Baloyra, pp. 61-62.

[2]Blaufarb, p. 86.

[3]Ibid., p. 96.

[4]Julian Preston, "Guerrilla Government Controlling Salvadoran Towns," Chicago Sun-Times, 20 November 1983, p. 36.

government, once quoted an official U.S. government document that stated that "land reform is an essential element of the pacification program and the resolution of the present conflict [in Vietnam] may well hinge on the success of pacification."[1] The importance of land reform as a campaign issue for the Salvadoran guerrilas cannot be overly emphasized. It definitely has a way of changing peasant attitudes.[2] Particularly in a country where "some 64 percent of rural families are seasonal and migrant workers, with no land or less than 1 hectare."[3]

> By transferring title to the land to the man who tills it--providing the terms were seen as fair and the government protected the title effectively--the authorities in the most direct and elemental way gave assurance of fundamental security to and control of his future by the peasant himself.[4]

Apparently this view is not wholeheartedly endorsed by the Salvadoran government. "The dismal story of land reform . . . mirrors the problem of most reformist movements [in El Salvador]. . . ."[5] The

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[1]Peter Shiras, "The False Promise--and Real Violence--of Land Reform in El Salvador," El Salvador: Central America in the New Cold War, Marvin E. Gettleman et al., eds. (New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1981), p. 168.

[2]Blaufarb, p. 219.

[3]Harold Jung, "Class Struggle and Civil War in El Salvador," El Salvador: Central America in the New Cold War, Marvin E. Gettleman et al., eds. (New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1981), p. 70.

[4]Blaufarb, p. 219.

[5]Chris Hedges, "Salvador Land Reform Plowed Under by Rightists," The Christian Science Monitor, 18 October 1983, p. 1.

intention of the land reform was basically to give land that belonged to oligarchic landowners, over to the peasants who had worked it. This effort, though, has been blocked by right wing elements in the government.[1] As it stands now, the program will probably be allowed to die from lack of support.

What happened to a program that Prosterman referred to as "the most sweeping agrarian reform in the history of Latin America?"[2] As originally planned the program was a three phase operation in which phase one involved government expropriation of farm lands over 1,250 acres; phase two, the expropriation of farm lands between 500 and 1,250 acres; and phase three would provide direct title to small farmers for small plots that they had worked. Direct title action would have occurred after lands had been turned into cooperatives to be rented or bought by the laborers who worked them.[3] Progress was made with about 20 percent of the land in El Salvador being distributed during phase one. Phase two implementation, however, was blocked by the landed oligarchy who owns the small coffee estates facing expropriation. Phase three has been virtually destroyed because of right wing intimidation of the new title holders. Those Salvadoran leaders who attempted to keep the program from total collapse face repression. Land reform has also suffered from criticism by El Salvador's top military officials and the right wing party, the Nationalist Republican Alliance (ARENA) and its leader, Roberto d'Aubuisson.[4] If the National

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[1] Ibid. [2] Shiras, p. 168. [3] Hedges, p. 44.

[4] Ibid.

Campaign Plan is to have any impact on this underlying issue, it must be more effective in dealing with this matter.

Another problem previously discussed is the issue of repression and the violation of human rights. Any gains made by the National Plan are quickly offset by government linked or sponsored repression. Even if one were to assume that the government officials are not involved in unlawful detentions, arrests, tortures, or murders, the success of counterinsurgency is threatened by the fact that the government, as the governing body of the land, cannot guarantee public safety. The issue of human rights has created tremendous controversy over the justification of U.S. economic and military aid. The subject of death squads is receiving enormous publicity from U.S. government officials and the press. This issue itself, perhaps more than any other, causes more negativity toward the Salvadoran government. The people are ambivalent toward the government because, on the one hand they cannot understand how the government can sponsor civic action projects to obtain popular loyalty in the countryside, while on the other hand, death squad activity continues without any apparent restraints. It is ludicrous to sponsor a counterinsurgency program under these conditions. Counterinsurgency can be a viable solution if kept in perspective and recognized with its limitations.

Finally, a situation that planners of an effective counterinsurgency plan must understand is that dealing with the issues of the insurgency take priority over ideological matters. In other words, the plan must succeed on its own merits. Justifying its merits as a confrontation between good and evil, democracy versus Communism, or

Marxism-Leninism will not suffice. It must be remembered that the National Plan is dealing at the grass roots level in the countryside where ideological terms have no meaning to a peasant. If the guerrilla movement responds to the needs of the people more effectively than the government, then labeling it Marxist-Leninist, does not make it evil in the eyes of the population. It appears that both the U.S. and Salvadoran governments are guilty of emphasizing this point rather than working at improving the quality of counterinsurgency action. The purpose of this study was not to defend the ideology of the guerrilla cause. The comparison of Marxism-Leninism, Socialism, Communism, or democracy for El Salvador is a political issue which has no bearing on the examination and findings of a counterinsurgency model. Nonetheless, this study speaks positively of the guerrilla actions strictly in the application of propaganda and psychological warfare, the recognition of the population's needs, and just plain common sense. The point is that the people of El Salvador, in the midst of an insurgency will base their support of the government on the key issues. The people of El Salvador will compare and judge the actions of the "democracy" of government-sponsored death squad activity with the "Marxism" of guerrilla attempts at land distribution. In the eyes of the people, ideology will be of less importance.

> In the dirty and dangerous business of revolutionary war, the motivation that produces the only real long-lasting effects is not likely to be an ideology, but the elemental consideration of survival. Peasants will support [the guerrilla] . . . if they are convinced that failure to do so will result in death or brutal punishment. They will support the government if and when they are convinced that it <u>offers them a better life</u>, and it can and will

protect them against the [guerrilla] . . . forever. . . .[1] (Emphasis added.)

It may be pure coincidence, but it is a fact that almost all the successful Communist revolutions . . . were conducted without Soviet help and often in disregard of Soviet wishes. The irony of this fact about successful Communist insurgencies lies in its contrast to the American perception which lay behind the development of a policy of countering insurgency, perceptions which saw in each insurgency the hand and will of a monolithic movement under Soviet domination.[2]

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[1]Simpson, p. 62.

[2]Blaufarb, pp. 7-8.

CHAPTER VIII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The National Campaign Plan for El Salvador is a U.S. inspired program which was put into operation in June of 1983 in the departments of San Vicente and Usulután. It is based on the concept of counterinsurgency which combines security measures and civic action to improve village life in the hope of winning the loyalty of the population over to the government side.

The doctrine of counterinsurgency as reflected in the National Plan is not innovative in its approach and essentially draws its technical concepts primarily from experience with rural pacification in Vietnam. Though Vietnam provided the U.S. with most of its test ground for these concepts, the principles of counterinsurgency had already been in effect in those Latin American countries which received military aid and training from the United States. The Cuban Revolution and Soviet statements recognizing and supporting "Wars of National Liberation" induced the United States in the early sixties to emphasize counterinsurgency as the solution to this apparent threat. Throughout this period the primary objectives of counterinsurgency changed very little.

The success of CORDS sponsored pacification reflected some gains in securing the countryside of RVN, but overall it failed to achieve more important and long range goals.

To insure success in the short term and in the long run, an effective counterinsurgency plan should confront and challenge the insurgency on three levels. First, from a programmatic standpoint, it must properly maintain the balance between military and civic action while carrying out the program in a prescribed and systematic manner. All aspects of a counterinsurgency plan must be followed to the letter to insure a smooth running program. Second, it must tackle the problems which legitimize the insurgency and create a cause for the insurgent. In this step, a government facing an insurgency may require radical reform in order to influence positive changes in the countryside. The government must be an entity which abides by the law and seeks to protect and assist its people. Third, the program should deal with the underlying intangible issues of social values and human pride.

This study concludes that unless U.S. counterinsurgency planners practice the lessons learned from the Vietnam war, the National Plan stands to fall short of its objective of defeating the Salvadoran insurgency. For reasons of national security it is not possible at this moment to verify whether or not the Plan is a counterinsurgency program which incorporates measures to deal with the various levels of problems posed by the Salvadoran insurgents. If one assumes that the Plan is an effective plan of action, then the reluctance of the Salvadoran government to reform; their failure to control death squad activity; and the inability of the military to control the countryside may be early indications of future shortfalls of the Plan. However, this may be a mere reflection of the inept application of doctrine by

the Salvadoran government; as opposed to a true reflection of the validity of the National Plan.

Regardless, the Plan will be judged on its ultimate ability to defeat the insurgency. If the Plan does not succeed, it will be the fault of governments failing to understand the underlying reasons and causes of revolutionary change in our modern world.

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